



The Little Rooster's Diamond Penny

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Long ago there lived a poor woman who had a little rooster. He wasn't just an ordinary rooster, although his mistress did not know it. They both lived in an old tumbledown cottage by the roadside.

One day as the little rooster was pecking away in the yard, he found a shining diamond penny.

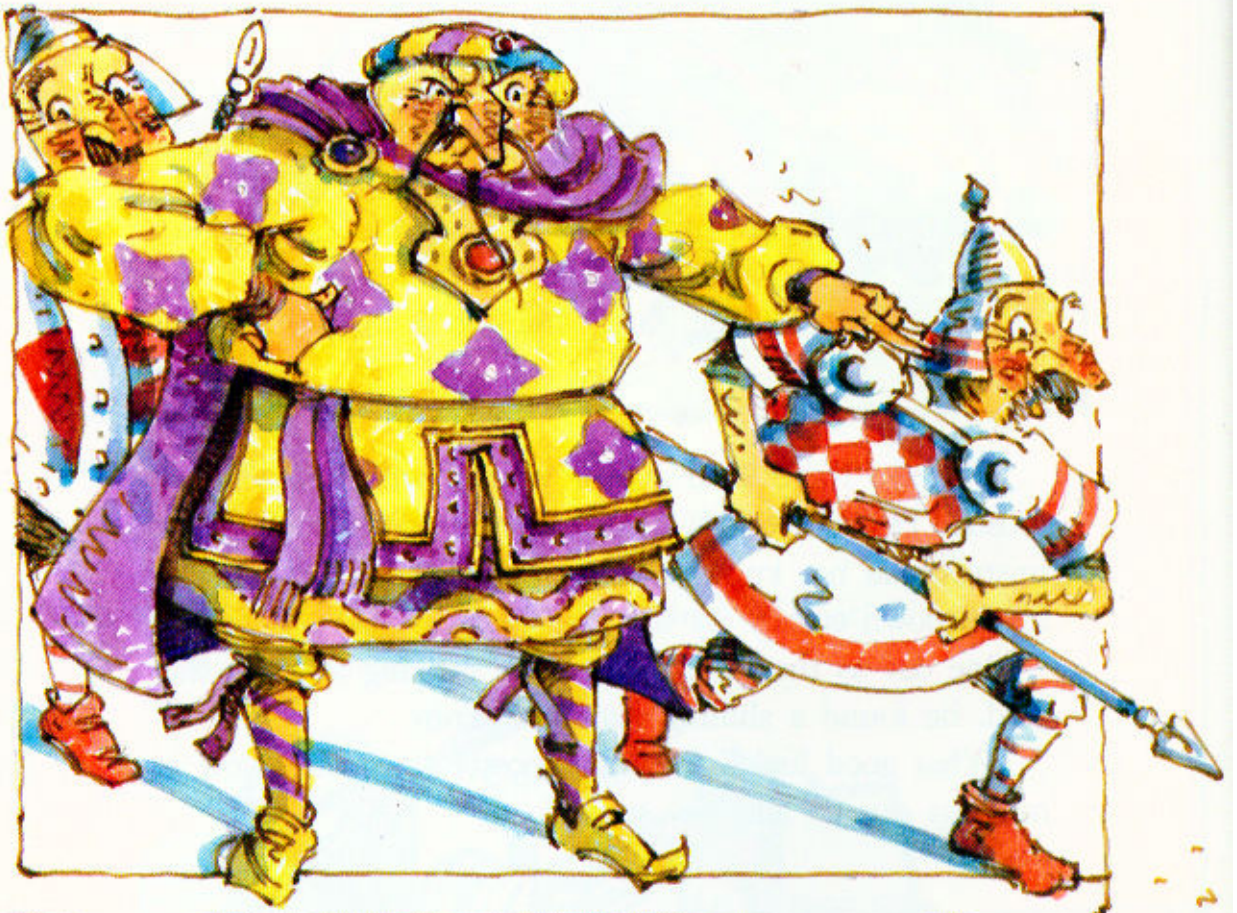
"What good luck," the little rooster thought. "Now my mistress can go and buy some food."

At that very moment, the Sultan came riding by with his army. His eyes filled with greed at the sight of the diamond penny.

"Guards," ordered the Sultan, "take the diamond penny from this rooster at once!"

The poor little rooster scratched the guards with his claws and pecked their hands with his beak, but they were too strong for him. They took the penny from him.

The little rooster was very angry. Instead of running away, he flew up and hid inside one of the guards' cloaks.



Holding on very tightly, he managed to ride along with the guard all the way to the Sultan's palace. As soon as they arrived there, he sneaked out, flew to the top of the wall of the palace gardens, and started to crow.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, Sultan, give me back my diamond penny!"

The Sultan stomped into his palace and banged the window shut. But the little rooster perched on the window ledge and made a louder racket than before.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, Sultan, give me back my diamond penny!"

This made the Sultan very angry. He wasn't used to anyone going against his wishes.

"Go!" he said to his servant. "Catch that rooster and drown him in the well!"

The servant caught the little rooster by the wings and threw him into the well. But as soon as the little rooster hit the water, he did a very strange thing. He began to murmur to himself very softly.

"Gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, suck in all this water!"

And sure enough, soon all the water was gone from the well.

Then the little rooster shook the water from his wings, flew up to the Sultan's window, and started to crow again.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, Sultan, give me back my diamond penny!"

The Sultan stamped his big foot and his face turned purple with rage.



"Go!" he shouted to his servant. "Catch that rooster and roast him alive in the oven!"

This time the little rooster didn't put up a fight. He even smiled a little to himself as the big servant threw him into the flames. As soon as the oven door closed on him, he started his magical chant.

"Gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, let out all the water and put out the fire!"

In an instant, all the water came spurting from his bottomless gizzard and soon the fire was out.

Very pleased with himself, the little rooster flew out of the oven through the chimney. Once again he perched on the Sultan's window sill and crowed at the top of his lungs.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, Sultan, give me back my diamond penny!"



The Sultan's next command to his servant was even more cruel.

"Go!" he yelled. "Catch that rooster and throw him in the beehive. The bees will sting him to death."



The obedient servant snatched the little rooster by his tail and flung him into the beehive. When the servant left, the little rooster began his secret chant.

"Gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, suck in all the bees!"

As before, the bees quickly disappeared down the little rooster's throat.

Delighted with his trick, the little rooster clattered up to the Sultan's window and began to crow and clamor.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, Sultan, give me back my diamond penny!"



In his fury the Sultan tore at his black beard. Then a slow, wicked smile spread over his face.

"Go!" he ordered his servant. "Catch that little rooster and bring him back to me. I'll handle him myself. I'll put him inside my bloomers and sit on him."

The little rooster could hardly wait to get into those big bloomers. As soon as he was inside the Sultan's pants, he murmured to himself.

"Gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, let out all the bees to sting the Sultan's seat!"

"Ouch, ow, oh my seat!" cried the Sultan, jumping up and down. "Take that little rooster to my treasure house and let him have his penny back!"

The guards escorted the little rooster to the treasure house and waited for him to pick out his diamond penny. Quick as a wink, the little rooster spoke the magic words.

"Gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, suck in all this treasure!"

In the treasure house there were three tubs full of money and seven chests of precious stones. When his gizzard was filled with treasures, the little rooster turned towards home and half flew, half ran until he landed at his mistress's front door.

"Look what I've brought you!" he cried loudly. He let out all the treasures from his magic gizzard right in front of the house. The sparkling mound of riches was as high as a mountain beside the poor woman's house.

The little rooster and his mistress danced with joy around the treasure heap, for they knew they would never again go hungry.